

JULY 16, 1967 - 2:15 p.m.

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BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS AND
RANKING MINORITY MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES

Sec. McNamara	Sen. Morse
Sec. Wirtz	Sen. Yarborough
Sec. Boyd	Sen. Dirksen
Attor. Gen. Clark	Sp. McCormack
Senator Mansfield	Rep. Ford
Senator Long	Rep. Boggs
Senator Russell	Rep. Albert
Senator Byrd	

Rep. Staggers	Sheffer Lang
Rep. Bates	Barefoot Sanders
Rep. Springer	Larry Levinson
Rep. Arends	Tom Johnson
Joseph Califano	
Mike Manatos	
Geo. Christian	
Warren Christopher	
Under Sec. Reynolds	

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 16, 1967

8:00 p.m.

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Tom Johnson

Here are the notes of your meeting with:

Secretary McNamara	Representative Staggers
Secretary Wirtz	Representative Bates
Secretary Boyd	Representative Springer
Attorney General Clark	Representative Arends
Senator Mansfield	Mr. Joseph Califano
Senator Long	Mr. Mike Manatos
Senator Russell	Mr. George Christian
Senator Byrd	Mr. Warren Christopher - Deputy
Senator Morse	Attorney General
Senator Yarborough	Under Secretary of Labor Reynolds
Senator Dirksen	Mr. Sheffer Lang - Department of
Speaker McCormack	Transportation
Representative Ford	Mr. Barefoot Sanders
Representative Boggs	Mr. Larry Levinson
Representative Albert	Mr. Tom Johnson

The meeting began at 2:15 p.m. The meeting ended at 3:20 p.m.

Attachment.

DETERMINED TO BE AN
ADMINISTRATIVE MARKING.

BY DCM ON 12-11-71

6-11-67

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NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S EMERGENCY MEETING
WITH THE
BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP
AND THE CHAIRMEN AND RANKING MINORITY MEMBERS
OF APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES

The President opened the meeting by reading AP ticker item 105.
Text of that item follows:

A Machinists Union strike has snarled or halted service on a number of railroads from coast to coast. The walkout threatens Vietnam war shipments and promises massive commuter jams tomorrow in some big cities. Some railroads hope to keep war supplies moving with supervisory personnel. In the rail dispute, operating personnel have been observing picket lines put up by the striking machinists. And both sides are putting pressure on Congress to break the deadlock. Involved in the year-long pay impasse is a railroad shop union demand for an increase in their average \$2.90-an-hour wage.

The President said he has asked Secretary Boyd to brief the emergency meeting on the extent of the strike. Secretary McNamara was asked to review the defense impact. Ramsey Clark was asked to review the legal situation in reference to the strike. Secretary Wirtz was asked to review the legislative and labor picture.

The President outlined a history of the conditions which led to the strike which began about a year ago.

The President's presentation to the group follows:

1. A strike by the machinists union against the major railroads began last night. It is now spreading. By nightfall, the entire rail system of this country may be paralyzed.

2. Secretary Boyd will brief you on the extent of the strike.

Secretary McNamara is here to tell you about the defense impact and what this means to the men in Vietnam.

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The Attorney General is here to fill you in on the legal situation.

Secretary Wirtz will talk to you about the labor and legislative picture.

3. Before they begin, I would like to tell you something about this case.

- The dispute began over a year ago. The major issues involve wages and the length of the contract. Collective bargaining then began.
- Last October, Chairman O'Neill of the National Mediation Board entered the case, but was unsuccessful.
- Last January, I appointed a special emergency board headed by David Ginsburg. After extensive hearings and a 1000-page record, its recommendations for settlement were accepted by the railroads, but not by the Unions.
- On April 10th, I sent to Congress a request for a 20-day no-strike extension, because all of the legal machinery we had to stop a strike was exhausted. Congress promptly granted that extension to give the parties a further chance to settle by collective bargaining.
- I then appointed a 3-man special board to work with the parties. It was headed by Judge Fahy, with George Taylor and John Dunlop. That Board's recommendations were rejected.
- On April 28th, I sent to Congress a request for a 47-day additional extension which Congress promptly passed.
- On May 4th, I recommended a proposal to resolve this dispute fairly and finally. It was developed by the wisest and most experienced advisors a President could have.
- The Senate passed the proposal, overwhelmingly - 70 - 15.

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- The House took a different course. The matter is now in conference.
- The Unions pledged that they would not strike while the matter was in conference. But late last week they withdrew that pledge, effective one minute after midnight this morning.
- Last Friday evening, the conferees urged the unions not to strike while the legislation was being considered. But the strike occurred notwithstanding.

Here, then, is the situation:

1. The parties have been unable to settle this dispute themselves.
2. I have no legal authority to stop a strike or to set up the machinery to settle this dispute finally.
3. The country is being plunged headlong into a disastrous strike. We are beginning to feel the pinch already.
4. It is now up to the Congress to act -- and it is imperative and crucial that it take action.
5. The best, most responsible and fairest action for this country would be to pass the Senate bill, with the necessary changes to meet the present situation.

Secretary Boyd said that 60% of the railroads are down today and that 80% of the railroads will be down tomorrow. The Secretary also said:

- Chicago's commuter lines are down.
- 45,000 commuters will be stranded because of the strike on the New York Central.
- The Pennsylvania railroad will be crippled.
- The New Haven and Long Island Railroads may not be able to operate because of picket lines.
- The Secretary said that 11,000 daily car shipments including 3,000 loads with perishables will be affected.

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- The Secretary said he knew of no violence except for one incident.

Secretary McNamara made the following report:

- 1,000 cars per week loaded with military supplies move via rail lines.
- 100% of the ammunition moves via rail.

The Secretary said there would be three principle effects of the strike:

- 1) There would be a halt in the production of much material which is essential for military requirements. These include acids, heavy steel for bomb production, coal, ore, and bulk materials.
- 2) Shipments would be disrupted to the West Coast. Although there is a five month backup of some essential items in Vietnam, some new items would be immediately affected. For example, the Secretary said the Mark-36 requirement is very urgent. There is a need for 5,000 of the Mark-36 per month and there are only 100 of these items in Vietnam currently. (The Mark-36 increases bomb effectiveness.)
- 3) The psychological effect on the troops is a very significant aspect, the Secretary said. Men are dying in Vietnam. They just do not understand the lack of responsibility on our part when a rail strike such as this develops.

Attorney General Ramsey Clark made the following report:

- Federal law holds no sanctions to stop the strike. In short, Congressional action is absolutely necessary.
- Because the strike is no in effect, both measures are now inadequate. Legal modifications in the language must be made.

Secretary Wirtz made the following report:

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- This is the first time in 45 years that a general railroad strike has taken place. The last general railroad strike was in 1922.
- The Secretary said he had been trying to reach Mr. Siemiller of the union for five hours today and had been unable to reach him until 15 minutes before the meeting. The Secretary said that Siemiller first told him he knew nothing about the strike. Then the Secretary said Siemiller contradicted himself by advising the Secretary that he expected that the railroads would be shut down 100% by Tuesday.
- As the President said, this comes at the end of a year of hard work. All of the unions settled except the Shop Craft union. Only one union, the Machinists, refused in the final analysis.
- The other five tried to get the Machinists to extend over the weekend. They would not.
- The Secretary said there are only 40,000 members in the Machinists who insist on this action, compared to 136,000 in the six Shop Craft unions verses 450,000 or 73% who already have settled. In short, 450,000 verses 40,000.
- The Secretary said Siemiller told him that he was not sure the Machinists would go back even if Congress acted. Siemiller also was quoted as saying, "We will urge and try to defeat every member of Congress who votes for it. The conferees took a three day vacation. We warned them."

The President said now Congress must act as quickly as possible. He urged the Congress to pass the Senate version of the bill.

Senator Morse said it appeared to him that both houses must pass a new piece of legislation in light of Ramsy Clark's remarks about the

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changes which are necessary in the language of the bill.

The President then signed an Executive Order providing for the use of transportation priorities and allocations during the current railroad strike to the Secretary of Transportation.

Congressman Ford said that he wanted to do what he could to assist in this matter. Speaker McCormack outlined the technical possibilities, noting that the conferees can disagree tomorrow sending the bill back to the Senate.

Congressman Staggers said he regretted being on the opposite side of this issue. He said that when history records it they will record President Johnson as one of America's great Presidents. But he said if we pass the Senate version of the bill, "We are going down a road we can't come back from." Congressman Staggers said that management is not without fault on this matter. He said management has been arbitrary.

The Congressman said tomorrow he was not going to recommend one way or the other, but that he was going to work to put it through. The Congressman said, we need more time.

The President said, "We have given them time. We have appealed for time too often. Someone has to resolve it. I have been as patient as I can."

Senator Morse said that Congressman Staggers has been considerate of the conferees. He said he does not see it completely as an issue of finality versus nonfinality. He said in his judgement this was a strike called by the Machinists. As far as he was concerned, Senator Morse said, that the strike has ended this conference. He said it is now a question of government by law or government by labor lobby. He said we would be subject to severe reprimand by the American people if we were to just sit and talk. Morse said that he was going to move that we stand on Senate disagreement and have the whole matter sent back. He said he "wants to get this thing over tomorrow."

Senator Morse said, "We are in a war and although all of you know my position on that war I will not be a party to anything which weakens the morale of our men over there. We must live up to what I consider to be a matter of trust."

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The Senator said that the unions are entitled to a fair settlement, but that the interests of all of the people are more important than the interests of only a few.

Senator Byrd said that the President had been very patient. He said the welfare of our men in Vietnam is at stake and he will support them and end the matter as quickly as possible.

Senator Mansfield told the President that the Senate would lay aside all other business of the Senate tomorrow in order to pursue the matter of the strike.

Senator Yarborough said that the conferees have worked diligently. He said some proposals would fail by close votes. He said he thinks the Senate bill is compulsory arbitration but he said that labor seems to want to make it harsher than what I think is good -- they have brought it on themselves by their actions in this strike.

He said that the Senate conferees had been notified to meet at 10 a. m. tomorrow.

The President said we do not want to be arbitrary. The Boards have been fair. If anything, the members of the boards have been pro-labor. The unions have had chance to negotiate without finality.

The President said, "How long does the President have to wait on Congress, or how long does Congress have to wait on Mr. Siemiller?"

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